

# GO GREEN

How to make **greener** choices in your everyday life. Embracing just one simple idea can make a difference and be the beginning of a sustainable lifestyle that can last a lifetime.

- **Keep a reusable bag in your car** for errands. If every American used cloth totes, we would waste 380 billion fewer plastic bags each year.
- **Tighten your gas cap** until it clicks three times. Each year in the U.S., 147 million gallons of gasoline literally evaporate into the atmosphere because of loose, damaged or missing gas caps.
- **Use soft white compact-fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs)**, instead of traditional incandescent. If every American household replaced one standard bulb with a CFL, we would save enough energy to power three million homes a year.
- **Donate your old cell phone to charity**, or return it to the manufacturer for recycling. Electronic trash amounts to 70 percent of America's toxic waste. Information on recycling at [mygreenelectronics.com](http://mygreenelectronics.com).

- **Eat a meat-free meal once a week.** Producing a pound of beef consumes 145 times more fossil fuels than a pound of potatoes.
- **Leave bar soap by the sink.** Most liquid soap comes in non-renewable plastic packaging. Substituting one bottle with a bar in each U.S. home would keep 2.5 million pounds of plastic out of landfills.
- **Stash a pitcher of water in your fridge.** A faucet releases a gallon a minute. Letting the tap run while the water cools wastes a resource that's often in limited supply.
- **Register to get your name off junk-mail lists.** Printing junk mail wastes 100 million trees a year. Sign up at [dmachoice.org](http://dmachoice.org).
- **Drive with cruise control on the highway.** Keeping a constant steady pace burns gas at a constant rate, which lets you drive as much as 10 percent farther on a single tank.
- **Place a recycling bin next to the wastebasket in your home office** to make conserving paper as easy as discarding it. Producing one ton of paper from recycled pulp saves 7,000 gallons of water (and 17 trees).

- **Plug your devices into power strips**, and turn off the strips when you're not using them. Some plugged-in appliances and strips use electricity even when they're turned off. One 6-outlet strip, when shut down, uses 87 percent less energy than devices left in six individual outlets.
- **Replace traditional showerheads with high-efficiency 2.5-gallon-a-minute models.** You will use 30 percent fewer gallons of water each time you shower.
- **Switch your computer display to go to sleep mode** after five minutes of inactivity. Sleep mode consumes 90 percent less energy than an animated screen saver – which requires as much energy as normal use.
- **Fix a leaky faucet**, a dripping faucet wastes five gallons of water a day. Talk about money down the drain!
- **Visit your local library** to check out the Kill A Watt EZ device. The easy-to-use device, provided by Ameren Illinois Utilities, accurately measures the electricity needed to operate a variety of household appliances and calculates the cost of that power. By better understanding your home's energy needs, you have the power to make more informed decisions regarding energy consumption. Call the Lincoln Public Library at 732-8878 to make arrangements to check out the Kill A Watt EZ.

- **Consolidate your errands into fewer trips.** Economizing your errands into just one or two trips each week can conserve as much as 55 gallons of gas over the course of a year.
- **Wash laundry in cold water,** or use warm-wash and cold-rinse cycles. Most detergents work equally well regardless of water temperature. Using cold washes in every U.S. household would save the equivalent of 100,000 barrels of oil a day.
- **Change your car's air filter and keep tires inflated.** A yearly tune-up can improve your car's efficiency by 15 percent and keep more than one ton of carbon dioxide out of the air.
- **Return wire hangers to the dry cleaners,** more than 3.5 billion hangers reach landfills each year, amounting to 200 million tons of steel that could be put to new use.
- **Use a toaster oven for simple baking tasks.** Countertop appliances consume half as much energy as electric ovens (and keep the whole kitchen cooler).
- **Scrub down your ride at a car wash,** not at home. A drive-through car wash uses less than half the water per car as a typical do-it-yourself wash and many car wash establishments recycle their water.